

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MORSON'S CHOICE," &c.

CHAPTER XXXI. TONY.

AT Vickery's bidding, on our return to the office, I duly endorsed my name on the writ as the person who had served it. Dicker Brothers, the plaintiffs in the action, were tailors in the Quadrant. I omitted to notice the name of the defendant. Vickery, I think, rather hindered me from acquiring this information, although I was not really curious on the subject. He always preferred to be mysterious whenever he possibly could; not that there could have been any real necessity for mystery in the present case; but secrecy and stealthiness had intrinsic and irresistible charms for him. He delighted, himself, in worming out hidden matters, and found pleasure in providing occupation of this kind for others, if they cared to avail themselves thereof. I did not to any great extent.

But two facts, in connexion with the affairs of the office, soon came to my knowledge with little stir on my part. In the first place it could not be concealed from me that Mr. Monck's circumstances were somewhat embarrassed. There seemed to be difficulty at times in his providing money to defray the current expenses of his business. Creditors began to call with increasing frequency, and were dissatisfied with the answers returned to their applications. They could not understand any more than I could Mr. Monck's constant invisibility, and were suspicious of the incessant engagements that held him aloof from them. They were not as yet angrily clamorous; but it was plain that their patience was yielding. And other evi-

dence was not wanting. Vickery, of course, made no sign, and whether his stipend as managing clerk was or not paid to him, could not be discovered. I fancied, however, that of late he had looked somewhat additionally pinched in appearance, and that his dress betrayed shabbiness and neglect that might fairly be attributed to access of poverty; while it was certain that the small wages of the boy Scoons were some weeks in arrear. I could hear him, in a dream-like condition, murmuring as much from his murky corner of the office; and as a consequence, perhaps, he grew quite vindictive in his wasteful treatment of the ink, and his cruel assaults upon the candles with the sharp point of the snuffers.

In the second place, it was plain that Mr. Monck's business, to say the least of it, did not increase. Now and then, as in the case of Dicker Brothers, some tradesman in the neighbourhood required legal aid in rousing the attention of a negligent customer; and in such wise a lawyer's letter was occasionally despatched, or a writ of summons issued and served. But this was really exceptional. There was in truth very little doing in Mr. Monck's office. Nevertheless he appeared to enjoy considerable repute as a practising solicitor. The house in Golden-square was rich in traditions of former important transactions. Mr. Monck's business had at one time, no doubt, been of a valuable and distinguished kind. But it now seemed to be subsisting upon its past fame. So far as I could comprehend the matter, Mr. Monck and his father before him had enjoyed a very profitable connexion with the West Indies. They were the representatives in this country of numerous planters and colonial proprietors, and had been charged with

the conduct of many Chancery suits, and appeals to the Privy Council and the House of Lords, upon the subject of West Indian interests. All this had, without doubt, been very lucrative to the lawyers. But the recent abolition of the slave trade had, with other influences, greatly depreciated colonial property, and as a consequence diminished litigation in that regard. No new business of this class came to Mr. Monck while I remained his articled clerk.

Still it must not be supposed that we were absolutely idle and without occupation. We were as a theatrical manager who does not depend for existence so much upon the production of new entertainments as upon an established repertory. We had, so to speak, our stock pieces, which proved themselves fairly remunerative. These were Chancery suits, for the most part, which, as I judged, had long been as heirlooms in the Monck family. They were subject to cataleptic seizures, and remained apparently inanimate for very prolonged periods. Still they awoke of themselves, or were roused by others at intervals, and were found to be yet possessed of life to some extent. At any rate they had money in their pockets, and, properly handled by the solicitors concerned, they yielded up this in the shape of costs, like sluggish travellers upon the compulsion of footpads. Some few cases of this kind—and no reasonable lawyer could expect to benefit by more than a few—yet remained in Mr. Monck's office, and kept it going after a fashion: the machinery working slowly and uneasily, with jarring and creaking, from lack of oil and power. But this was the normal method of Chancery movement at that period.

Of these prodigious and venerable proceedings of immemorial origin, and though still existing, fallen into exceeding dotage and decrepitude, I really knew little more than the names. Even these were complicated by supplemental and ex parte transactions, by the original case having littered, as it were, and produced a progeny of descendant and additional suits. Still in the ardour of my novitiate I made repeated efforts to master certain of their complications and mysteries. In all there was unquestionably a "fund in court," the origin and mainspring of the litigation. Round this fund in court generations of plaintiffs and defendants had gathered, and fought, and perished, bequeathing their share in the property, or rather their

share in the contest for the property, to their descendants, who had struggled on until, in their turn, death had overtaken them, and others filled their places, armed with their abandoned weapons. In one suit—I think it was Dobson *versus* Dicks—in addition to the fund in court a landed estate called the Happy Retreat, in the Island of St. Mungo, was also the subject of strife. This property, I remember, had frequently been valued and revalued, and the most fluctuating opinions prevailed as to its worth. There was a testator who had made an incomprehensible will, and appointed trustees and executors, some of whom would act and some wouldn't. There were various charges upon the estate, and a fierce struggle had arisen among the mortgagees as to who held the first, and who the last, encumbrances. There were trustees also of the testator's marriage settlement charged to pay an annuity to his widow out of the income of the estate, and intrusted with separate provisions for the behoof of the children of the marriage who were thus brought in and made parties to the suit. Then the widow had married the overseer of the estate, and so the case was recruited by more trustees and a fresh family. The overseer claimed to be a partner in the estate, or to have some extraordinary lien upon its profits. Doubts had arisen as to the formality of the testator's marriage, and as to his capacity for executing a will, and thereupon all his next of kin had come in as claimants. Next the consignees of the produce of the estate asserted themselves to be secured creditors for an enormous amount, while on the other hand efforts were made to demonstrate that they were in truth debtors for an equally large sum. Some one had gone mad, and committees of the lunatic had to be appointed, and accounts taken of his revenues and possessions. Some one else had gone bankrupt, and in such wise a swarm of representatives, assignees, and creditors had been added to the suit. There were numberless infants who appeared by their next friends, and whose interests the court was supposed to watch over most jealously, even to keeping them all tightly bound hand and foot. There was some one always paying large sums of money for premiums on policies of insurance on the life of some one else, and a great question had arisen as to where the money was to come from that was to pay these premiums, and as to whether any one was really entitled to receive the amount

of the policies when the assured's life dropped. Of course some of the parties to the suit had been committed for contempt, and it was supposed that a few had died in the Fleet or the King's Bench prison, unable to purge themselves of their sins in that respect. Moreover, some of the parties had disappeared altogether; and though they had been advertised for, and all sorts of officers of the court directed to search and inquire and report concerning them, still they were not forthcoming, and it was conjectured that they were hiding away in the uttermost corners of the earth, expressly to be out of the reach of the Lord Chancellor, and out of hearing of the case of Dobson versus Dicks. Of course everything had to be doubted and proved, and of course everybody questioned and derided the claims and the evidence offered by everybody else. There were doubts about births, about marriages, about deaths, about every mortal thing, indeed. A fresh crop of difficulties was always growing, and any sort of a practical close to the suit seemed to become more and more inconceivable and impossible. It had outlived I don't know how many chancellors. The original will was supposed to bear date some time in the last century. The shuttlecock had been first struck by the then Master of the Rolls, and had since been creditably battledored by his successors and the chancellors and Appeal Courts for the time being. It was heard and reheard, was "spoken to," came on for "further directions," or "on petition;" was argued and re-argued; was now referred to this master, now to that, then to the other; evidence was required and affidavits beyond number were filed, and witnesses were examined upon interrogatories. States of Facts were carried into the Master's Office, followed by Further States of Facts and Counter-States of Facts, and accounts were taken and schedules sworn to, and every document had to be draft-copied, and fair-copied, and office-copied, and brief-copied for counsel, and every party to the suit had to be formally served with a copy of everything. It was certainly a wonderful suit—at least it was so in my eyes. Vickery never appeared to think that there was anything very remarkable about it. I presume that he understood it thoroughly, but I am not sure. I know I never did. I have only hinted at a few heads of it, appearing like patches of dry land above a dark unfathomable sea. For my labours as an

articled clerk in Mr. Monck's office were chiefly devoted to copying the multitudinous and ever-increasing documents in Dobson versus Dicks.

One day I was dining at the house in Rupert-street.

"I felt sure that we should meet again, Mr. Nightingale." Mr. Tony Wray was the speaker. "May I sit at your table?" Of course he might. I was thankful enough for the chance of bettering my acquaintance with so pleasant-spoken a young gentleman.

"You dine here pretty often, I suppose? I used to when I was at Mr. Monck's. And I come here still every now and then just to see how things are going on, you know. Roast mutton will do very well, I think, William; and say apple-pudding to follow." This was to the waiter. "I like this house. Wilkie and Haydon used to come here, you know, and that gives it a sort of artistic and historic interest. Wilkie I've never seen; but Haydon I have often. I attended his lectures. They were really grand. And he stood behind me once when I was copying the Theseus in the British Museum. 'The Greeks were gods,' he said; 'but don't follow them slavishly. Nature before everything; never forget her or try to dispense with her; refer to her always. Your eye is correct; but your hand is infirm. When you begin to paint, paint everything life-size. Study anatomy, dissect, cleave to the skeleton, master the muscles. Your drawing wants force; but for so young a student it's commendable. I tell you so—I, Benjamin Robert Haydon.' That was what he said. A short man, wearing spectacles, with a high, bald, shining forehead, and a firm, ringing voice. I thought it kind of him; for my drawing was but a poor thing. Still it was encouraging and interesting of him to notice me."

"You are an artist?"

"Well, I should prefer to call myself a student. Though of course, in a certain sense, an artist is always a student. But I've done little enough as yet; I'm only a beginner; though I intend to do great things of course; who doesn't? I've rather a knack of beginning things. The difficulty I find is in going on with them. I began law once, as you know. But somehow I couldn't get on with that at all, though I tried to, for a time. Yes, and I copied all sorts of papers, writing as neatly as I could; and I actually read a book or two—not that I understood them. I don't

pretend that for a moment. And I began medicine once. It struck me it was rather a good notion feeling people's pulses and looking at their tongues; punching them in the side, asking if it hurt them, and then looking wise, and writing a prescription for them. I thought that was just the business to suit me. I really thought I might rise to great distinction as a doctor. But it was of no use. I'd forgotten to take into account the dissecting room, the hospitals, the surgical operations, and all that part of the business. My nervous system—I may say my stomach—refused to stand it. I bought a head once for anatomical purposes; but I couldn't touch it after I'd bought it. I felt as though I'd murdered some one, or were engaged in some hideous crime. So I gave the head away to a fellow-student; he was glad enough to get it. He'd no compunctions, bless you. He had the skull polished and made into a sort of tobacco jar. I'm not sure he didn't drink out of it. But it was odd, I thought, Haydon telling me to dissect. I had dissected as it happened; at any rate I had made a beginning that way. And I do know something of anatomy—the bones, the muscles, and all that kind of thing."

"And you'll go on with art?"

"Yes, I think so, for I adore art, and a fellow must go on with something, you know. I've always held that opinion. And I've real taste for art, and, if I may say so, am rather clever at it than not. I haven't done much, of course, at present. That was hardly to be expected. I'm young, you see, and I always feel that in cases of this kind there's never any real occasion for hurry. I simply ask for time to turn round and look about me and consider the bearings of things. I like to go on in my own way, which is rather, perhaps, a leisurely kind of way. Not that I am without enthusiasm. I abound in enthusiasm, and I am always looking forward to grand achievements. Looking forward is, indeed, quite an occupation in itself. I find myself constantly employed in that way. I can even see myself in the distant future—I don't pretend to say it will be very immediately—elected President of the Royal Academy. That will happen, I dare say, much about the time you receive your appointment, or patent, whatever it's called, as Lord Chancellor."

"I hope it may happen before that," I said.

"You're very kind. It may or it may

not. I promise not to be disappointed in either case. Still I should much like in my position as President to be painting your portrait as Lord Chancellor. I think I could do a good deal with such a subject as that. Your head, in a certain light, has really an impressive aspect. I should take a three-quarter view of your face, I think; it's characteristic of chancellors, you know, to be turning a little away from the present to keep the past in view. Then the wig and robes, the mace and seal—I should really enjoy painting those accessories. There's a great deal to be done in art in the way of carefully rendering details and compelling them to help tell the story of a picture. I should make a really fine work of your portrait. I feel that; I'm quite confident about it. Indeed, I feel tempted to order in a large canvas and begin upon the thing at once."

I suggested that it would be certainly premature to paint me in the character of chancellor, and to this he laughingly assented. "It would only be taking time by the forelock, however; and, you know, we're always recommended to do that. I never have yet, that I know of; and it seems a pity to abandon so good a chance of doing it."

I found his talk and manner delightful; both were so new to me. And there was a certain graceful, airy unconsciousness about all he said and did that won upon me greatly. His speech might be nonsensical, but his simple faith in its soundness was indisputable. He was admirably unaffected. And though he seemed to be idly prattling he was plainly sincere the while, for the moment. He spoke with effortless liveliness, sensible that his utterances possessed an element of humour, yet laying no stress upon this or demanding its recognition; he talked on from mere natural cheeriness of heart with a sort of quiet fervour underlying even his strangest speeches. His blue eyes twinkled and his face was lit up with a frank, genial intelligence as he spoke; the while his dainty white hands fluttered like birds about him in appropriate unstudied action. He talked himself quite out of breath.

"I'm devoted to art, as I said. But I don't avoid other pursuits. I can't deny the charms of literature. Indeed, at one time I had really a great mind to be a poet. I think—I say it with all modesty—I possess some gifts that way. I'll own to you that I have dabbled in the waves of Helicon—just gone in up to the ankles—not much

more than that. I've never really plunged in headlong. Still I found it pleasant. The water did not strike cold upon me. It was agreeably warm. Some find it boiling, no doubt; and some ice-cold. It was tepid; that was my feeling about it. But I keep on prating about myself. How vain and egotistical you'll think me. I'm not so really, Mr. Nightingale, I do assure you. Tell me how you're doing. How do you get on with Mr. Monck, my uncle. You know that I suppose?"

I stated that I had not yet had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Monck.

"Not seen him? But no, of course not, I forgot." He checked himself as he was about to say something. "I must not tell tales out of school," he added; and for a moment he looked grave and remained silent.

Tony Wray and I swore an eternal friendship; not in words or ceremoniously, but the matter was perfectly understood between us all the same.

OUR KITTY.

On the resignation of a somewhat comatose Abigail, with fiery hair and blinking eyes, we had to "look out," as it is called, for an "own maid." After some trouble we came by our Kitty in the following way.

At some genteel apartments by the seaside we were co-tenants with a military family, commanded by a hoarse major, who ruled over a shrinking, delicate wife and a young family that seemed to live entirely in perambulators. A room half-way up on the drawing-room flight appeared to contain them all, for we could hear the door open to let out a short sharp bark for "Kitty," and shut again with a bang; while the flurried Kitty would be heard rushing from the depths. The major, besides his military duties, seemed to act as nurse, dresser, if desired, tutor, &c., to say nothing of his taking vast delight in railing at the unhappy Kitty. It was a great sight to see him and his family going out to walk in procession—the malacca cane and delicate wife going on in front, the two well-charged perambulators following behind, propelled by the unhappy Kitty, and a temporary drudge. How he contrived to combine these nursery offices with his duties to his regiment, seemed incredible, but he did so, and with success. No doubt he "confounded" the unhappy Kitty, as he did the privates of his regi-

ment; possibly using a shorter, sharper, and more satisfactory form of malediction, and roared away at her as he did at his men.

The major was ordered off, and Kitty hearing that there was a vacancy in our little corps, was enchanted to enlist with us. Her wretched wage as drudge was doubled on this promotion. She was wild with delight, and could have prostrated herself at the feet of her new employers. She would do everything, and would be the most faithful and grateful of dependents. Various articles of dress were released from embargo, and Kitty entered on her new duties. She was a handsome, high-spirited creature, and with some hesitation ventured to make a stipulation that no hindrance should be put in the way of religious duties. On Sundays and other festivals she would ask to be allowed to practise devotion; she had been brought up so strictly. This was considered by the Half (complimentarily styled "better") of the highest promise; but in the mind of the worse one it started the gravest doubts. However, both said that we should see, and we did see eventually.

The first thing that I did see, three weeks after engagement, was the spectacle of Kitty returning from church. I rubbed my eyes. She was fashionably attired, with parasol, black silk, veil, flowers—bonnet as inappreciable as any worn by her betters—chignon (or "sheenon" as she always called it), and, above all, a not at all unsuccessful imitation of what is called a "panier." But this was not all. She was in an animated conversation with two gentlemen belonging to different services of the country; one being in Her Majesty's Guards, the other in the police force of our city. When it is considered what an antagonism, not to say jealousy, exists between these two arms, and what an utter stranger she was to the district, the reflection that the young lady possessed a store of gifts that we had not given her credit for, forced itself on me.

It was evident that the conversation was of a rallying kind, the two gentlemen dealing in rough and noisy gallantries, which were met in a Di Vernon style, and with a readiness of repartee that must have come from long practice. On stern interrogation she had a story ready. Surely, he of the Guards had been in the major's old regiment! "I thought I should have dropped. And when they began to talk of old times, and ask questions about the old people," &c. All this story was set out

with a richness of detail that conveyed everything except conviction. After all, too, this was the land of liberty, where there was no literal offence against the laws in the fact of a young maiden speaking on the highway with a private in the Guards, or for that matter to a member of the Force. However, as was before remarked, we would see.

We had a very young but steady cook, and a composed but intelligent man-servant, who seemed to concentrate himself on his business with an ascetic devotion. These elements, we thought, must insure steadiness, acting as a sort of ballast. Within a short time, however, sounds of hilarity would occasionally rise through the house, clearly to be traced to a sort of story-telling gift which the new Kitty possessed. Indeed, her influence in this direction was appreciated by her mistress, who confessed to me, with some hesitation, that "it was really wonderful how clever Kitty was;" how she would, when arranging hair or otherwise decorating, humbly beg leave to be allowed to spin a short yarn, or relate diverting adventures of some friend or acquaintance. One night at the theatre we had been amused by the antics of a certain Miss Fitz-Smith, of the corps de ballet, who wore blue satin trousers and a velvet jacket, and whose entry, I perceived, was greeted by the Half with something like pleased recognition. I was then told that before this young person had reached her present high position, she had been on probation at some country theatre—a most excellent, well brought-up girl, with a hard-working mother and sisters—the father a drunkard, who had run away—the girl the prop of the whole family, a model of propriety under the usual temptations, with other details of the fullest kind, related with some little confusion, yet not without a certain pride.

"Why, how on earth," I said, in amazement, for I had hitherto plumed myself on a monopoly of theatrical information, "do you come to know all this?"

She answered, "Oh, Kitty knows all about them. She has often taken tea with the Fitz-Smiths—is quite intimate, indeed."

It then transpired that most of the Scherzade tales with which she used to beguile the three hundred and sixty-five nights and mornings of hair-dressing, &c., were usually based on legends of the stage; and this, too, accounted for a certain familiarity with the lives of actors and actresses which I had lately noted in

the better Half. I was henceforth a prey to doubts, to uncertainties. What was this Kitty? It really looked as though she had been herself on the boards, or perhaps had tried to secure entrance there without success. There was a theatrical air about her. The worst was, she had gained over her mistress, who thought her "a very good girl," full of a proper spirit, all heart and real affection. And once indeed, when her mistress was taken with a sudden faintness, the first object seen on recovery was the faithful creature on her knees with clasped hands and streaming eyes; the mistress declaring that during the inattention she was conscious of hysterical lamentations.

Yet there could be no doubt but that she was introducing the reign of pleasure into the house. A little remark of hers, "how curious it was that we were all, every one of us, in the house, young—cook, maid, and man, master and mistress," made a deep impression, conveying that we were made for life and jollity, and that work was more for the aged. She always conveyed the idea of being an old retainer, and though with us only a few weeks, had contrived to exhibit this in a highly ingenious way. She discovered little anniversaries: my birthday, the mistress's birthday, a festival of the Church, her own birthday, the "anniversary of master and mistress's marriage;" and on such occasions, as I descended to breakfast, I would find a little bouquet in a breakfast cup filled with water, with a little scroll attached. On the scroll was a legend, "Many happy returns to master, who will excuse the liberty." These little artless tributes delighted mistress, though master, it must be confessed, always accepted them with something like a grimace. It was the sure prelude to an elaborate banquet and jollification—in our honour be it observed—and to which we were expected to contribute a quart of spirits to be made into the punch with which our health, "many happy returns," and the rest of it, was to be drunk. What excited my distrust in all this was the wedge-like fashion in which progress was being made, for I was acute enough to see that repetition would soon make precedents, and that precedents would make right. Punch and jollification, after all, lose half their charms when celebrated in a comparatively private and domestic fashion. You must not want a friend or a bottle to give him, to insure the true festivity. "Poor Susan," the cook,

pleaded Kitty, had influential relations in the bacon business out at Clapham. She was an orphan, we were reminded; the poor girl's worldly prospects depended on those potentates being conciliated, and would it not be permitted that they be invited? In a weak moment this was granted, and, as I foresaw, was to be made a precedent of. The apartments below were filled with an invited party—a country person in a blue coat and brass buttons, with his "missus," and the rest of his family, and a person who was suspected to be a member of the Force, though he came in plain clothes, and a female acquaintance or two. The sounds of solo singing presently arose, each being called on in turn, and required to name some one else, the member of the Force giving Red, White, and Blue, with effect and full chorus; our Sue, Come Back to Erin, in high sentimental style, the blue coat and gilt buttons contributing nothing; but the feature of the night was the irrepressible Kitty, who gave I Love the Military, from the Grand Duchess, with extraordinary vigour and effect. Shuffling sounds were heard, attended with obstreperous applause and delight, from which it was almost a certainty that she was giving the company an idea of the rather indecorous dance that succeeds the melody. The Kitty, it must be said in justice, seemed to be the life and soul of the party. She indeed, described the whole scene later when taking down or putting up the hair, with an extraordinary vivacity, convulsing her employer. In vain I warned. It was, according to my favourite illustration, the small end of the wedge. The creature would grow demoralised and demoralise others. But I was not listened to.

We had to go abroad the following winter, and with us went abroad the indomitable Kitty. In the very packet she displayed her foibles, and was discovered behind the funnel engaged in a flirtation—if her rustic advances deserved the name—with a person she called "a gentleman;" but this she ingeniously justified on the pretence of picking up foreign information for us. At our destination, which was a lonely, rather unfrequented spot, supposed to have great healing virtues, she had an ample field for the exercise of her qualifications. There was a large fishing population, and a number of gay young shopkeepers, and the good-looking young English "mees" or *bonnes* was much esteemed. She set to work almost at once. She would come in

with a complaint of the dreadful attentions to which she was subject, but at the same time never relaxed a moment in decorating herself with finery to invite what she affected to deprecate. She received letters in broken English—so she told us—from innumerable gentlemen (all were "gentlemen" that came within her net), and would come with something like tears in her eyes to beg protection from their attentions. There was some truth in her statements, though she could embellish—a habit she had unconsciously learned from her story-telling. It was remarked, too, that at this time began that invariable postponement of her regular duties to the incidents of the various little romances in which she lived—the regular service, as she seemed to suppose, for which she drew her wages. This delusion would have been amusing were it not that it was attended by inconveniences. Dress, finery, perpetual expeditions, and "slipping downs" to some corner or other, which are so often the prelude to some moral slipping downs—these things were incompatible with anything like the business of a servant. She was treated with amazing indulgence, and the artful hussy knew that she could always extenuate her neglect by an amusing tale or delineation of some admirer clumsily making known his devotion. But presently she was actually to become a sort of heroine, and after that it seemed as though the question were not so much whether we would keep her, or whether she would keep us.

A young grocer, who supplied us with the higher groceries—such as wine, and indeed he would have resented being described as a mere *épicer*—had, strange to say, become a genuine admirer. He came every morning for orders, a custom not at all familiar to the place, and generally brought some little present selected from his stock. He was really a worthy youth, hard-working, money-making, and prosperous. We little knew, however, that our burly landlord's niece—a plain and somewhat elderly virgin—had long marked him for her prize, and that the burly uncle and the virgin herself had, previous to our coming, been paying him such honourable attentions as in other countries and ranks are supposed to lead on young men to hymeneal offers.

A perfect storm of fury burst upon the Kitty's head when the young man's homage became conspicuous. It was the one topic in the little place, and the whole town took the side of the deserted niece. The Kitty relished it with a mischievous enjoyment,

and purposely used to take her way through the market-place for the purpose of inflaming the fish-women and others who congregated there, and greeted her with fierce glances, squared elbows, and noisy denunciations. Fearful scandals were set abroad about her; the supplanted maiden would have torn her eyes out. The stout uncle came to me mysteriously to speak about what he called "a very grave matter," namely, that "the young girl" had been seen in the dark walking with *all* the dissolute young fellows of the place. Every one was talking of it. His was a respectable house, and he wished it to be so. Though never feeling indulgence for Kitty's vagaries, this speech put me on her side, or it may have been that the old national antagonism that was roused. I replied, with dignity, that if he felt any scruples we would be glad to leave. This alarmed him, and he hurriedly explained away what he had said. It was in the girl's interest; the young man was gay, as we all had been (though he had no warrant to include me in his compliment); and as for marriage, why—here the burly landlord made a sound with his lips like "Pouah!"

Below in the kitchen raged spiteful battles; but it must be said Kitty was quite a match for their Gallic fury. Plots were set on foot to destroy her; anonymous letters were sent to us and to the lover, but without much effect. The confusion and dismay may be conceived when it was known that actual proposals of marriage had been made—made, too, without mistake or ambiguity. Kitty, though highly flattered, did not conceal her national contempt for the "dirty Frenchmen;" and though the alliance was in every way desirable, could not be induced to entertain it a moment. Still she was determined to plague her enemies, and on this account beguiled the unhappy young man still more, and always chose market days for a public promenade with him through the market.

At last we left the place, taking with us our Kitty, who had contrived to embroil all the natives. The young man attended us at the station, and could not conceal his tears. This was all very well in an international or holiday view, but for the work-a-day purposes of life it was now to be discovered that our Kitty was of no use. What could be expected from a heroine? She began to complain of her nerves, and to languish. She was found gazing ab-

stractedly in the glass, when she should be "doing" her mistress's hair. When it was announced that a servant-acquaintance was going to be married, our Kitty declared with ineffable conceit, "I declare, ma'am, I think I'll take away her lover from her." This, in fact, she seemed to think was the service for which she was engaged, mere vulgar humdrum attendance or labour being outside the contract. It was to be all romance, agreeable anecdote, parties of pleasure, with such few moments as she could reasonably spare to be devoted to those low offices of hair-dressing, &c. She lay in bed of mornings, and came down undecorated and ungarnished, grumbling at being disturbed. A heroine has her privileges. This was endured for a time, but at last came the straw which broke, morally speaking, both our backs. She demanded leave to attend a junketing. "Oh, ma'am," she added, "there's Lady Judkins's own maid to be there, with the groom to whom she's going to be married, and I'll have such fun, making her jealous."

This proposal was coldly received, and it was strictly ordered that the heroine should forego the promised luxury. I foresaw what was coming, and enjoyed the opportunity which I had longed for. With this view I proposed going out, as if to the play, thus baiting the trap as it were. Kitty fell into it. When we returned she was absent, and on the following morning was informed that we could not any longer treat ourselves to the privilege of maintaining a heroine. She wept a little, but it was all in vain. That failing, she took leave with some indignation, as though her talents had been rather thrown away.

DRAMATIC SOUVENIRS.

EARLY impressions leave their permanent mark; and, like proof engravings and prints before letters, retain their clearness and increase in value when later images have lost their distinctness. Here is one.

Dumas the Elder's introduction behind the scenes of the Théâtre-Français occurred on the evening of the first representation of *Sylla*. He was then two-and-twenty. His introducer was Adolphe de Leuven, the author of the *Postillion of Longumeau* and other pieces. He was to be taken into the presence of the man called sometimes the French Roscius, sometimes the French Garrick, but whom posterity will mention as simply Talma. He was deeply and

doubly impressed by the event. It was his first glimpse of the corridor of a theatre—that is, of the interior corridor which leads to the artists' dressing-rooms. The corridor of the Théâtre-Français was full. De Leuven, familiar with the labyrinth, took him by the hand and dragged him through the crowd.

They reached Talma's room. There, the press was even greater. It is doubtful if the Dictator ever saw more clients at his door than his representative, that night, had admirers at his. Both Dumas and his friend were then slender young fellows. They glided on like eels till they reached an antechamber where all the literary celebrities in Paris were packed as closely as human beings could be. Many of the faces, Etienne and Soumet for instance, were as new to Dumas as the actor's ceremonial reception. While struggling to get into the second chamber—the sanctuary in which the idol was enshrined—some one called out, "Room, if you please, for Mademoiselle Mars!"

They squeezed themselves into nothing, with their backs to the wall. A charming frou-frou of rustling satin was heard, the air was filled with perfume, and in the midst of a cloud of gauze shone eyes as bright as diamonds and teeth as white as pearls. The gracious phantom glided past them, and a voice, mellow as the tones of hautbois, was heard, expressing, with an accent of perfect sincerity, the depth of its admiration.

It seemed to Dumas that Mademoiselle Mars said "vous," indicative of respect, while Talma said "tu," denoting familiarity and protection; and that the two great artists kissed each other. The same rustling frou-frou was once more heard; Mademoiselle Mars reappeared, exchanged a few words with Etienne and Soumet, signalled with her hand a "bonjour" to Adolphe, and disappeared. Lucky Adolphe! His companion could not understand how he contrived to receive the favour so coolly.

"Come along," said Adolphe, "we must go in too."

"I dare not," was the juvenile reply.

"Nonsense! He won't even notice you."

What a bucket of iced water to pour on Dumas's humility, or on his self-conceit, as the case might be! The encouragement did not encourage him in the least. Nevertheless, he plucked up courage and made his way into the second room. If not always stout, he was always tall. Although

only just inside the door, and without the wish to advance any further, by standing on the tips of his toes he could see over everybody's head and shoulders. His eyes sought Sylla, with his laurel crown, his imperial tuft, his dictator's toga, and he beheld everybody crowding round a little old man in a flannel dressing-gown, as bald as your knee.

Dumas could not believe his eyes. But Adolphe went and embraced the bald man in the flannel gown. It was decidedly Talma, and no mistake.

Subsequently, the great actor baptised Dumas dramatic poet, in the name of Shakespeare and Corneille, but died before he could render him effectual assistance. A five-act tragedy had been written, *Christine* at Fontainebleau. Whatever might be its imperfections, Talma would have found in it an original part, unprecedented on the French stage—the part of Monaldeschi—a coward! Talma would have seized the character by the collar, and held it till it became his own. No one had ever dared to put a cowardly hero on the stage. Dumas dared, but in perfect innocence, without a thought of making an innovation. He had found the character ready drawn to his hand in *Father Lebel's* narrative.

If climbing in courts is slippery work, rising in theatres is not a whit less so. To obtain the reading of a piece, at all times difficult, was still more difficult then. His patron, Talma, being dead, after considerable efforts he managed to get at Garnier, the prompter of the Comédie-Française (another name for the Théâtre-Français). Through the prompter Garnier he mounted to the actor Firmin, a clever little man of five feet two, forty years off, and six-and-twenty on, the stage. Like all five-feet-two men, he was touchy and quarrelsome, but brave enough when it came to fighting. His great ambition was to play Bayard. Scores of times he asked Dumas to write a Bayard for him, always adding, "You must not suppose Bayard was a colossus. On the contrary, he was short rather than tall, and slim rather than stout. Bayard was a man of my size."

After efforts only rivalled by the patience of ants and a few other insects in surmounting difficulties, Christine was read before the committee (that is, the leading artists) of the Comédie-Française, (one of whom, Monsieur Lafon, did not attend), who neither accepted nor rejected it, but referred it to the judgment of one

Monsieur Picard, ex-actor and dramatic author, who granted Dumas an audience at the end of a week. Playing with the manuscript as a cat plays with a mouse, he inquired, in honeyed accents, "My dear monsieur, have you any other means of subsistence besides the career of letters?"

"Monsieur, I have a place of fifteen hundred francs a year in an office under the Duc d'Orleans."

"Well, then," said Picard, pushing the roll into his hands, "go to your office, young man; go to your office."

But Picard's opinion had not been accepted as infallible. The author must have been saved from utter discouragement by finding the actors interviewing him. On reaching his office, he found that Monsieur Lafon had called. This gentleman filled the rather ranting line of parts known as "chevaliers français," although it included Orosmane, Zamore, Achille, and other heathens; namely, parts dressed in a black cap, a white feather, a yellow tunic, tight pantaloons, buff-skin boots, and a cross-hilted sword; Bayard, Duguesclin, Raoul, Tancredi. Of course he was vain. When he spoke of Talma, he said "the other."

Lafon soon returned to the office. "Monsieur," he said, on entering, "you have written a tragedy on Queen Christine."

"Alas!" replied Dumas, "I cannot deny it."

"You would be wrong to deny it, monsieur. It seems your work contains great beauties. Such is everybody's opinion."

"Except Monsieur Picard's."

"What signifies Picard's opinion? Your piece is accepted, and I came to tell you so. But, Monsieur Dumas, haven't you amongst your characters a spirited fellow who, when the queen wants to murder poor Monaldeschi, interposes and says, 'Majesty, you have not the right to do it. No, no, no; you have not the right'?"

"Sapristi! Monsieur Lafon, now I think of it, there is no such a part. It is too late to remedy the omission. But, que voulez-vous! I am only an apprentice."

"But cannot you introduce the part? I will answer for the play's gaining by it."

"No doubt; but it was not written from that point of view."

"Comment, Monsieur! Is there not, in the whole court of Louis the Fourteenth, a chevalier français, to plead, like the Talbot of Jeanne d'Arc, the cause of this unhappy stranger?"

"The event occurred, as I have dramatised it, fifteen leagues from Paris, nineteen from Versailles. There was no time for any chevalier to interfere. The murder was instantaneous. Its suddenness is the queen's sole excuse."

"She has no excuse, monsieur," said Lafon, indignantly. "I am to understand, then, that in your Christine there is no spirited fellow to say to the queen, 'Your majesty has no right to kill this poor man. No, no, no. You have not the right, and you shall not kill him.'"

"And since there is no such personage in my Christine——?"

"My visit has no further object. Your most humble servant, Monsieur Dumas. Good luck to your Christine."

"Thanks for your kind wish. And if ever, in a subject which admits of it, there should be required a spirited fellow—handsome, well-built—standing no nonsense——"

"You will think of me."

"I give you my promise, Monsieur Lafon."

The door closed, and the actor came no more.

Two months afterwards, Christine was ordered for rehearsal. The favour was incredible, for there were authors who had waited five-and-twenty years. One day the office doorkeeper announced Mademoiselle Mars. The visit completely upset Dumas. "What Mademoiselle Mars?" he asked.

"Are there two Mademoiselles Mars?" said a voice outside, which he recognised from having heard it on the stage.

"Yourself, in person!" he exclaimed, hurrying to the door.

"Certainly. As you do not go to see your actors, the actors are obliged to come and see their author."

"Ah, madame; I did not presume——"

"The moment you are accepted by the Comédie-Française, you are received by the comédiens français."

"I did not know it."

"There are a good many things you don't know. I am come to have a long talk with you, and you don't know that you ought to offer me a chair."

After discussing the distribution of the parts and the fitness of the actors in a business-like way, they came to the real object of the talk. The lady pulled from her pocket her written part (of course Christine)—which was not only copied, but learnt by heart. She observed that,

in her scene in the first act, there were six-and-twenty lines which she did not like, and which she requested should be omitted. Now there may be better rhymed verse than those lines, as there is worse. They are scarcely worth translating here. On the English stage, however well spoken, they would probably occasion a yawn; and we may believe that the actress, who knew her profession, was right. But, at that time, Dumas thought them the finest verses that ever were written, and would not yield. After a short discussion, Mademoiselle Mars made her exit, as stiffly as she had entered graciously.

At rehearsal, she skipped the objectionable lines, telling the prompter that the author meant to cut them out. The prompter, knowing the actress, warned the obstinate author that unless he suppressed the verses, the play would be suppressed too. Dumas was firm. Consequently, next day, Mademoiselle Mars was indisposed and could not attend rehearsal, nor the day after, nor the following day, nor ever; so that, instead of being played at the Théâtre-Française by Mademoiselle Mars, Christine was eventually produced at the Odéon with Mademoiselle Georges as the Swedish queen.

One day Dumas met Lafontaine, the excellent actor who had "created" at the Gymnase and the Vaudeville a considerable number of different parts.

"Do you know one thing, old fellow?" asked Lafontaine. "I am engaged at the Théâtre-Français."

"I am sorry for it."

"How; sorry for it?"

"Yes. They have not engaged you, my poor boy, to make you play, but to prevent your playing at another theatre."

"Don't believe that. In the first place, they give me the choice of a part for my début. Guess which I have chosen."

"Oh! the repertory is too large, and I haven't time to indulge in that amusement. Out with it at once."

"Well, then, I make my début in—The Cid."

"You commit a stupidity. You will break down completely."

"I have no talent, then?"

"On the contrary, you have plenty of talent; but it is not talent which is required to play the Cid."

"Oh! I will play it after my own fashion."

"In that case, you will be still worse.

If you had absolutely set your heart on coming out in the Cid, you ought to have told me so. I could then have made you a Cid to suit you out of the Spanish Roman-cers and Guilhem de Castro."

"You think yourself, then, cleverer than Corneille?"

"My poor Lafontaine, are you come to that, even before playing the Cid?"

"But, in short, The Cid is The Cid."

"Yes, certainly, The Cid is The Cid; but the genius of the seventeenth century is not the genius of the nineteenth century. You, my mistaken friend, are a completely modern man, an actor of the present day. You will admirably give my son's or Octave Feuillet's prose, Hugo's verse or mine; but you won't know how to recite Corneille's verse."

"You think, then, that verses ought to be chanted?"

"Some verse is none the worse for it. Racine indicated by musical notes the tones for the characters of *La Champmeslé*, nearly in the same way as notes are written for the epistle and the gospel in saying mass."

"We are talking of Corneille, and you cite Racine. Corneille ought to be spoken like prose."

"If Corneille had thought his verses ought to be spoken like prose, he would have written his tragedies in prose and not in verse. No, my dear fellow, to recite verses is an art, and a great art, which demands years of study, especially when the verses are transported from one epoch into another; when, instead of speaking the language of every-day life, you have to speak the language not spoken for two hundred years. Ah! if *The Cid* were a 'human-nature' play, like Shakespeare's, I shouldn't have a word to say. Shakespeare's plays, especially when translated into a foreign language which obliterates the mark of their date, can be acted at any epoch. Moreover, *The Cid* is a tragedy by no means written in the true French spirit, and its success was only a succès de circonstance."

The Cid, in fact, is not a play, but a protest; not a literary but a political triumph. There are few of Corneille's pieces, beginning with *The Cid*, which are not trials in a criminal court. *The Cid* kills Don Gormas; the king is informed of his death by Don Alonzo, who at the same time announces the arrival of Doña Chimène, to demand justice. But simultaneously with Chimène, who is the counsel

for the prosecution, comes Don Diègue, the counsel for the defence; and the trial begins.

Horace, again, irritated by his sister Camille's imprecations, kills her. Here we have quite a different affair to the Cid's—past a joke, sorricide, or—if that word be rejected—fratricide! This time, Valère is the public accuser. But, as King Tullus refuses to pronounce judgment unless the prisoner is defended, he turns to him and says:

Horace, defend yourself.

And Horace defends himself in a speech not less able than the opening of the case by the Roman attorney-general. Consequently, as the situation is the same as in The Cid, as the punishment, exactly as in The Cid, would strike the saviour of the state, the sentence is the same, and Tullus pardons in nearly the same terms as Don Fernand.

Apropos to this latter tragedy, one evening, when Dumas was receiving a large party of artists, Mademoiselle Rachel said to him, "Come and see me in Camille. I have hit upon a striking effect which is much applauded, and which I think is really fine."

"When do you play Horace?"

"Next Saturday."

"I will be there." And he took care not to miss the rendezvous given by Melpomene, as her fanatic worshippers called her. He had not asked where the promised effect was to be introduced; but knowing Horace by heart, having seen Camille played by all the tragediennes who had succeeded each other during the last thirty years, acquainted with all the theatrical traditions, he was sure not to let it pass without observing it. He sat, like Sister Anne, in the balcony, looking out for something to arrive. The first, second, and third acts passed without producing any besides the usual points, which Mademoiselle Rachel gave with her accustomed talent. The curtain rose on the fourth act; and, as in the fourth act Camille is killed, he felt at every line that the decisive moment was approaching. He saw, moreover, that the actress was playing her best for him. She really was magnificent.

At last came the capital scene of the fourth act, in which Horace enters followed by Procule bearing the swords of the three Curiaes, and in which Camille, face to face with her brother, bewails the fate of her slaughtered lover. She marvellously rendered three-quarters of her speech, ex-

actly like the Rachel Dumas had always known. But after the line:

Give me, barbarian, a heart as hard as thine,

her voice grew gradually weaker and weaker; the last four lines were uttered with the languor of a person at the point of death; after which, she fainted away. The closing words literally died on her lips, and she fell back senseless into the well-known tragic, uncomfortable arm-chair, which must be specially inconvenient for fainting fits.

As may be easily supposed, such weakness only exasperated, and not without reason, her victorious brother. Let his sister curse him, well and good; she was still a daughter worthy of Horatius; but that she should faint was much too bad; and while the house was ringing with applause, he roared out the lines beginning,

Was ever woman fired with equal rage!

(he ought to have said, "with equal weakness;" for a syncope can hardly be described as rage), and concluding with,

His death secures the interests of Rome.

At the word Rome, Camille shuddered. Then with a prodigious study of nature's hesitations, slowly, little by little, and, so to speak, fibre by fibre, she came to herself. Nothing was omitted in her return to life, neither the trembling limbs, nor the dull eye, nor the infiltration of thought and intelligence into the still inanimate body. At last she suddenly awoke from her torpor and recovered her voice to give vent, with closed teeth and increasing fury, to the remarkable anathema beginning

Rome! All I owe her is eternal hate!

The climax, thus worked up, brought the house down. Rachel, while making her exit, gave Dumas a triumphant look—and he, perhaps, was the only person of the audience who had not applauded her. The act over, he hastened to her dressing-room (where French actors and actresses receive their intimate friends), in a state of considerable embarrassment. She had evidently reckoned upon his approbation; but far from approving, he blamed her.

"Well," she asked as soon as he entered; "what do you say to the effect?"

"The effect on the public, or the effect you have discovered?"

"Of course, my effect—the effect I have hit upon."

"I am sorry, my dear friend, that a woman of your talent should hunt after such effects, and above all that she should find them."

"How so?"

"'Tis as plain as can be. Do you think it consistent with Camille's nature to faint on learning her lover's death? And do you fancy a woman, on recovering her consciousness, would utter such a line as

Rome! All I owe her is eternal hate?

Insult your brother, scratch his face, tear out his eyes; but for Heaven's sake don't faint. One thing only has surprised me; namely, that the shade of old Corneille did not start from the boards, and cry, 'Up with you, spiritless Roman hussy! In the family of the Horatii, women die, but they do not faint.'"

"Nevertheless, you authors of the romantic school like to follow nature——"

"My liking to follow nature is the very reason why I, for my part, blame you while the crowd applauds you."

"But it is woman's nature to faint."

"That depends on the woman."

"At least I know one thing. When Monsieur de M. was brought to my house wounded in a duel, the sight of his blood made me faint."

"But you are not a Roman of the time of Tullus Hostilius. You are a femmelette nerveuse, a poor little hysterical woman, of the nineteenth century. You are not the daughter of old Horatius; you are only the daughter of Daddy Felix."

Dumas's preaching was all in vain. Mademoiselle Rachel was enthusiastically applauded; Mademoiselle Rachel continued to faint.

Such is a sample of the reminiscences to be found, by those who care to look for more, in Alexandre Dumas's *Souvenirs Dramatiques*.

SUNSET IN THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS.

OBAN, ARGYLSHIRE.

The bay is smooth as glass; no breeze awakes
To stir its silent depths. The white-sailed boats
Are all as still, as though an angel's hand
Had painted them upon the sleeping sea.
The Earth in deep, expectant silence, waits
To catch the lingering rays of golden light
Thrown fondly on her by her lord, the Sun.
He sinks! the king of the all-glorious Day!
Flinging his lavish smiles on rock and glen,
Till the grim peaks of Mull grow rosy red
Beneath his glance; as maiden's blush replies
To the first pressure of a lover's kiss.
Anon, he scatters streams of purple light
Across the water, in such wantonness,
That one small wave, elated with the sight,
Bursts, rippling, from the calm of former rest
And breaks, in bubbling laughter, on the shore.
Sudden, a cloud, shaped like angelic wings,
Of fiery crimson, stretches o'er the sky,
As though some flying messenger of God

Were spreading o'er the world his pinions wide
To shelter 'neath them, wearied human-kind.
Grey old Dunolly, on its rocky steep,
Seems lit with golden glory. One by one,
The bright tints fade in thin and tender lines
Of palest pink, and softest emerald hue,
While on the distant summits of Ardgour
A glowing orange light shines suddenly,
Then pales and dies in wreaths of purple mist.
Scarce now is seen the radiant orb of light,
Lower he sinks, and lower! he is gone!
And tender Twilight steals on tip-toe soft
Across the mountains. But the brilliant fires
Lit by the Sun upon the tranquil sea,
Defy her misty shadow for a time,
And dance together on the crystal tide,
Till all, uniting in a dimpled smile
Of parting splendour, fade and die away.
Mull shrouds herself in veils of violet mist,
And from the sky, the faintly beaming stars
Timidly peep, to see if they may shine
In their own lustre, till the Queen of Night,
The silver moon, steps out to shame them all.
Pearl of the Highlands! Scotland's brightest gem
Art thou, fair Oban, nestling 'neath the hills.
Nature puts on her gayest robes for thee,
And heather-bells fling amethystine light
Over thy sternest crags and wildest glens
Till thou art like a very Fairyland.
Would I could dwell amid thy loveliness,
Heedless of all the tumult of the world,
And hear the music of thy leaping burns,
And sail across thy mountain-sheltered bay,
Thus, seeing naught but grandeur and delight,
I'd live such life of perfect peace on Earth
As should prepare me for the peace of Heaven!

MY FRIEND THE MAD-DOCTOR.

I AM not a peculiarly nervous man, and yet I confess that a certain feeling of distrust stole over me as I entered the fly to go and dine with my friend Horniblow, the medical director of a large county asylum in the North of England.

I had seen much of the insane, visited asylums in many parts of the world, and read much about the treatment of those unhappy fellow-beings to whose dreadful disease too often death alone can bring an anodyne. It was not that when an insidious footman opened the hall-door I expected to find myself in the centre of a gibbering and howling mob of fifteen hundred madmen, it was not even that I expected to be stabbed or strangled on my way to the dining-room, but still a certain tinge of apprehension at being so near fifteen hundred people with turned brains, controlled by a mere handful of attendants, filled me, I confess, with a vague alarm, of which I felt half ashamed. There would be half a dozen locked doors between me and the mad folk, and it was not very likely that a crazy insurrection would wait my arrival to break out; it was perhaps rather the dread of the appearance of something horrible and startling, than the actual fear

of a positive danger, that had roused my somewhat fervid imagination.

The reader perhaps imagines the director of fifteen hundred madmen a pale man with enormous bushy black eyebrows and whiskers, a large featured face, mouth hard as steel, and eyes of terrible fixed power. He must be of herculean build, and be able to either grapple for life with a madman, or strike him dumb with a glance of the eye. My friend, on the contrary, was a handsome, slightly-built man, with very fair hair, long blonde whiskers, the pleasantest of smiles, and the blindest and most conciliating manner. A man who, but for a certain look of calm good sense and acute sagacity, you would have taken, if you had met him in Regent-street, as a pet of society, a leader in the ball-room, and a lion of the Row. To judge him correctly, you should have seen him in the lunatic wards, firm yet kindly; in his study; or poring over the microscope; or watching by the dying bed of suffering and misery.

Except that the footman who received me in the hall looked rather more muscular and soldier-like than usual, there was really nothing to remind me how near I was to fifteen hundred madmen, who, if they had agreed on any definite line of action, could have torn us all to bits in five minutes. Once during dinner, between the soup and the fish, I fancied I heard a wild distant scream that sounded very like the shriek of some one being murdered, but it was not repeated, and I looked at my friend Horniblow, who was just then engaged in drawing a sort of ground plan on the body of a turbot; but he was calmly intent on his task.

Presently, when the dinner was nearly over and our glasses of Burgundy were casting little red danger signals across the white cloth, Horniblow, after some remarks on the opera season and the last new novel, suddenly threw himself back in his chair with a fine pear which he began to peel, and said:

"Now, my dear fellow, I'm at your service; we have every sort of insanity here, and I'm ready to answer questions on any point you are interested. Imagine yourself a commissioner of lunacy, or two or three if you choose, and ask me anything you like."

The doctor, discussing the pear as he uttered these words, looked as bland and beneficent as if he had spent his life in a round of tranquil pleasure.

"Do you believe much in the power of the eye in intimidating the insane?"

"I believe a good deal more in two strong warders," said the doctor, with a benevolent smile. "These lunatics are always cunning, and one does not always know when they're homicidal. I'll give you an instance. Last March, one of our attendants, a strong active man, was watching an epileptic patient, and after poking the fire, he forgot to lock up the poker as he had been especially ordered to do. He had turned his back from the man and was looking out of the window at the patients exercising in the airing-courtyard below. All at once the homicidal impulse came with the opportunity; the assassin stole softly behind him and killed him with one blow; after that beating the head to pieces. The blow was actually seen by an attendant, but too late to render assistance. The murderer afterwards, when describing his crime and praying aloud for his victim, prided himself on its accomplishment. 'I struck him,' he said, 'and you know I could strike, for I was a striker by trade.' The man was tried for murder three days after, but being found unable to plead, was sent to Broadmoor, where criminal lunatics are confined. For a time that murder upset our whole asylum, made the patients mutinous, and the attendants timid or inclined to undue severity."

"Do you effect many complete cures?"

"About fifty per cent, and I think with improved treatment we shall be able to cure eighty per cent. Fetters, strait-waistcoats, cold shower-baths, incessant bleedings, surprise-baths (where the floor of a dark room gave way under the patient's feet and let him fall in), are all abandoned now as mistakes and barbarities, and we use instead anodynes, electricity, warm baths, and generous diet. Our success is the best proof that we are nearer the mark than our ancestors were who effected fewer cures."

"Is it not injurious to patients to see visitors at these weekly dances that you give? Does it not excite them?"

"You must remark, we only admit five hundred patients out of fifteen hundred to these plays and dances, and the result is excellent. The patients learn to exercise habits of self-restraint, are pleased with the kindly questions and sympathy of the visitors, and feel that they are not entirely shut out from the outer world. You would be surprised how the patients restrain themselves for fear of being prevented from coming to our weekly amusements."

That effort of self-restraint is most valuable to us as a curative power."

"What trades contribute most to your male lunatics?"

"We have nearly all trades," said the doctor, calmly sipping his wine; "but perhaps labourers, colliers, and mill hands preponderate here."

"To what do you attribute the majority of cases of insanity?"

The doctor smiled benignly. "There," he said, "you ask almost too much, but perhaps I might answer accidents at birth, congenital defects, hereditary tendency, injuries of the cranium and nervous shocks. Congestions of some organs produce insanity, and drinking and vice send us many a patient. Ambition, vanity, avarice, all have their victims here. We'll have some of them in presently, and you will hear them detail their peculiar fancies; in the mean time pass the wine, which has been standing with you some time."

I apologised for my inattention, and asked the doctor if he had many spiritualists under his care.

"Not at present," was the reply; "but many religious maniacs very much akin to those conversers with sham spirits. There was one young woman here, some time since, who believed she had committed the unpardonable sin mentioned in the New Testament. It was important to discover the special point of her delusion. Over and over again I pressed the subject. At last, one day, in a quiet mood of melancholia, she confessed that from vanity she had once shaved her eyebrows. Another patient I had, who, laying undue emphasis on the text, 'Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die,' spent the whole day in revolving in a kind of dervish waltz, till he fairly dropped from exhaustion."

Our conversation then turned on hypochondria and its strange delusions, which are often so ludicrous and yet so difficult to remove; and we discussed the clever stratagems that had sometimes been successfully adopted to dispel these fanatic hallucinations. The doctor, as might have been foreseen, was full of illustrations of this class of insanity.

"I was very successful in one case," he said. "A military man I attended believed that his head had been changed for that of a patient who died in the same ward. I humoured him on this point, waiting for my opportunity. Every day he used to mourn over this misfortune and look at himself in the glass. One morning when

I went to see him, I had prepared myself for a last vigorous effort to break up this delusion. The moment the door opened I looked at him full in the face, and fell back as if in astonishment. 'What's the matter, doctor,' said he. 'Matter, captain,' said I, 'why only that you've got your own head back again at last.' He gave a look of surprise, ran to a glass, stared at himself with astonishment and delight, and with a deep sigh of relief exclaimed, 'God be thanked, so I have.' He was well from that moment, and never relapsed."

"Of course," said I, "various wholesome influences had been brought to bear on him in the asylum, and a general improvement in health had taken place before the fitting moment for you to step in arose."

"No doubt—my experience instinctively selected the moment for striking at the delusion. By-the-by, I'll tell you a curious instance from the case-book of a friend of mine, who is at the Newcastle asylum. It is an extraordinary and typical instance of a thought being stereotyped in the mind by a cranial injury. In this case it was the man's leading thought at the time the injury was received. He was an engineer employed in the construction of cannon at Sir William Armstrong's factory. He was struck by a splinter of iron, and was for a time deprived of sensibility; when he recovered consciousness he was insane, and all his ideas turned upon huge guns. His constant delusion was that he could mow down whole armies at one discharge by means of a machine which he himself had invented, and he used to perpetually toil at turning the handle of this imaginary machine till he was ready to drop from exhaustion."

"I have heard cases," I said, "where blows on the head have benefited the brain and produced extraordinary changes for the better."

"Just so," said the doctor, rubbing his own head approvingly. "Mabillon was almost an idiot till, at the age of twenty-six, he fell down a stone staircase, fractured his skull, and was trepanned. From that moment he became a genius. Doctor Prichard mentions a case of three brothers who were all nearly idiots. One of them was injured on the head, and from that time he brightened up, and is now a successful barrister. Wallenstein, too, they say, was a mere fool till he fell out of window, and awoke with enlarged capabilities. I had a patient here a short time ago who was

the victim of many delusions. He was paying off the national debt, going into partnership with Baron Rothschild, and forming a lodge of female freemasons. One day an epileptic patient, irritated at being perpetually asked to buy imaginary shares, gave him a tremendous blow on the bridge of the nose. From that time he improved rapidly, and told me that the blow had had a sobering effect, and had quite knocked the nonsense out of him."

"You had better start a sparring school at once," I suggested.

"There is no doubt," said the doctor, smiling, "that this was the secret of that cruel old remedy for madness—the circulating swing, mentioned favourably by physicians of the last century. This horrible swing was a small box fixed upon a pivot, and worked by a windlass. The 'inflexible' maniac, or the maniac expecting a paroxysm, was firmly strapped in a sitting or recumbent posture. The box was then whirled round at the average velocity of a hundred revolutions a minute, and its beneficial effect was supposed to be heightened by reversing the motion every six or eight minutes, and by stopping it occasionally with a sudden jerk. The results of this swing (which occasionally brought on concussion of the brain) were profound and protracted sleep, intenser perspiration, mental exhaustion, and a not unnatural horror of any recurrence to the same remedy, which left a moral impression that acted as a permanent restraint. That the results were often beneficial we have indisputable evidence.

"The cases of suspended consciousness after brain injury are also well worthy attention," continued the doctor, after a pause.

"A man who awakes out of sleep is conscious of a lapse of time, and can generally even guess its duration; but the man struck on the brain is often unconscious of any lapse. I knew a man who was in the asylum in 'seventy-one, who had been struck in the street and was afterwards delirious. He was unconscious after the blow for fourteen days. He was then delirious and maniacal for ten weeks. When he became more tranquil, they brought him here in a strait-waistcoat. He soon recovered, but when he became conscious he had clean forgotten the fourteen days' trance, and the ten weeks' delirium and mania. I'll give you another example: at the battle of the Nile an English captain was struck on the head by a shot, and became unconscious. He was taken home

with the wounded, and remained in Greenwich Hospital fifteen months deprived of sense and speech. At the end of that period an operation was performed, and the brain relieved from the pressure. He instantly rose from his bed, and continued the orders to the sailors which had been so abruptly interrupted fifteen months before. Dr. Abercrombie gives an analogous case. A lady was struck with apoplexy while sitting at the whist table. It was Thursday evening when she fell, and she lay in a stupor all Friday and Saturday. On Sunday she suddenly recovered her consciousness; and her first words were, 'What are trumps?' The clockwork had stopped at that point, and now the pendulum again commenced to swing."

"Very interesting," I said; "but how much we have to learn before we know that clockwork thoroughly. Microscopic differences seem to be the boundaries between health and disease, great intellects and small; to the microscope then we must trust, and to the study of years of examples. We certainly owe much to Gall and the phrenologists for drawing attention to the study of the brain, and for trying, however imperfectly, to localise the faculties. It was a tremendous step forward from the dreamland of the metaphysicians."

"It was, indeed. Of all Gall's researches, those, I think, on language were the most imperfect, because he tried to localise too much. Doctor Browne, of the Crichton Royal Institution, has written a most curious and interesting essay on aphasia, or loss of speech in cerebral diseases, which bears on this subject; the doctor shows that it is certain some part of the brain must be injured before this loss arises, but then there are many sorts of deprivation. Doctor Browne gives some most extraordinary instances of this—but I'm tiring you out."

"Tiring! What did I come for but to consult the oracle?"

"The oracle is obliged to you for the compliment; and, moreover, as you seem interested upon this curious question of brain diseases affecting the organ of language, the oracle will now give you a few notes from various sources on this very subtle subject. Without discussing such technical subjects as to whether local or general disease of the brain leads to partial or total deprivation of the power of language, I will read to you, my patient listener, a few of the most remarkable cases of such deprivation, which is called

by us oracles aphasia. You have, of course, observed how a particular word will sometimes refuse to come at the bidding of the writer or speaker. Such instances are specimens of temporary aphasia. The clockwork, for a moment, refuses to act. The memory, for a moment, seems paralysed, or in a stupor. Doctor Jackson, of Philadelphia, relates a case of cerebral irritation, which did not affect either intelligence or memory; but the patient could only repeat one grotesque form of words, which were always, 'Didoes doe the doe.' He was bled and soon recovered. Mezzofanti, the master of seventy-two languages, was entirely deprived of them all by a brief attack of fever. The moment the attack subsided, the languages all flew back like bees to the hive. In these cases, when the power or will to use intelligible language seems gone, there is sometimes substituted a jargon (as we call it in asylums) peculiar to the patient, and with a marked character of its own."

I expressed my great interest at this.

"Well, I allow it is worthy of your astonishment, and would only be observed by oracles who have a wide experience of all forms of insanity. A patient at the West Riding Asylum, in 1868, uttered words all framed on this model. The following were words taken down from her lips, and all of them had a vague resemblance to Greek: 'Kallulios, tallulios, kaskos, tellulios, karoka, keka, tarrorei, kareka, sallulios.'

"She would utter this jargon for hours together, and ask or answer questions in this self-manufactured language, and seem surprised that no one understood it. Not unlike this strange talk was the 'unknown tongue' spoken by the Irvingites when in violent states of religious excitement, about forty years ago. A Scotch pamphlet of the time gives the following as divinely inspired utterances to which the less gifted listened with awe and amazement: 'Hippo, gerosto, hippo, booros, senoote, Foorime, corin, hoopoo, Jarno, hoostin, hoorastin, hiparous, Hispanos, Bantos, Boorin, O Pinitos, Elalastina, Hali-mungitos, Dantitu.'

"Now, unless these could be shown to be words of real languages, and languages unknown to the speaker, they merely show a power in certain minds when excited (and madness is only a super-excitement) of inventing words which only the insane seem to have the power of remembering and using again. At that very same period a

medical man took down the following jargon from the lips of a patient in the Montrose Asylum who had never heard of Irvingism: 'Ellueam, vuruem, erruxuem, vaulem, bathoram, ullem, dathureem, been, tuurem, ellexuem, vara, ellevara, exullem, dathellia, villera, civen, ureme, vas, cillera, exeram, datherveam, liaulveiliueuem, villera, repthallon, erriphultou, bilirea, ebillerea, lubluron, eluberon,' &c.

"The natives of the Cevennes used to prophesy and speak in unknown tongues, no doubt the result of what would, in the Middle Ages, have been called 'demoniacal possession,' but really the result of the above-named causes. In some cases lunatics will talk in rhythm; and Doctor W. A. F. Browne gives a remarkable instance of one patient who, for four days and nights, spoke no words but such as ended in 'ation,' a termination which the man added to every word he uttered. His pronunciation was correct, and the terms, as far as they could be interpreted, bore some reference to the questions asked him, as, for instance, "gratification, robustation, jollification," which meant that he was pleased to say he was healthy and happy. This iteration gradually ceased, and the man eventually died of general paralysis. In some cases of idiocy the patient can only utter monosyllables, in others they utter only oaths, or roar like wild beasts; in one case the loquacity I remember was so intense that the words were all run into one long sentence. A maniac in the Salpetriere used to speak clearly and significantly, but with frightful feverish rapidity, especially when irritated. Mixed with threats of vengeance and imprecations, she used to tell those she abused, parenthetically, that she did not mean what she said, that she loved them, and felt grateful to them for their kindness and forbearance, but that, though anxious to please them by being silent, she was constrained by an irresistible agency to speak."

"This reminds me," said I, the most patient of listeners, "of Lord Dudley Ward's inability to prevent talking aloud, and uttering his opinions (not always peculiarly favourable) of persons present."

"Exactly; his brain had been prematurely developed; he had probably incipient disease of the frontal lobes, and he eventually died insane. There is a celebrated French case, where the patient could only articulate one word, 'cousin,' and yet could play well at draughts and dominoes. But, come, you have had enough

of these medical stumbling-blocks." Here the doctor rang the bell, and a footman appeared. "Are they assembled, John?"

"Just going in, sir."

"Now," said the doctor, "we will reduce theory to practice. This is the night of one of our weekly entertainments, and I'll make any patient you like come up and tell you his history. You will see here almost every variety of monomania, many curable, and in the state of convalescence. Come with me, but you must have a glass of sherry first."

We first discussed the sherry, and the doctor then led me through the corridors of several wards into the ball-room. It was a very large handsome room, with bare floors, and a gallery for the musicians. At one end was a sort of alcove; the medical attendants and the guests (including many ladies) were seated. On either side of the room, four or five deep, sat the patients, the men one side, the women on the other, quiet and contented. Here and there a melancholy madman turned away moping apart, absorbed in his own weary thoughts, and apparently unconscious of what was passing. Soldier-like attendants and young nurses, trimly dressed in black, attended to the patients, or chatted together. Here and there an eye turned to the doctor, but I saw no look of fear or alarm. Every one was on his best behaviour. It was evidently remembered that oddly-behaved and excitable people had before now been expelled.

In the intervals of what is called, I believe, in asylums "the Circassian round"—a sort of march past of all the patients, with a four-handed reel at intervals, rather a ghastly and insane kind of dance it must be confessed, but still suited to every capacity—I entered into a conversation with a fussy little man with a wooden leg, who assumed the manner of one in authority. I set him down at once as a mechanic who had been a foreman, and I heard afterwards that my conjecture was right. He had worked at some dockyard, and had tormented the ministers by incessantly haunting Downing-street, and soliciting interviews about some mad scheme of national defence. It had become at last necessary to put him under some restraint. He seemed perfectly happy, and evidently believed himself to be very useful and the manager of the whole entertainment. He was very loquacious, and talked nonsense in the most rational way possible. He had a way of conveying troops underground to the sea-

ports to prevent invasion. He knew how to do it. He had laid the matter before ministers. It could be done as easily as you raise your hand; but there were the Jesuits against it. As he changed the subject every half-sentence, it was rather difficult to follow the scheme minutely. He was all winks and smiles, and spoke confidentially, as if it was unnecessary to more than hint at a plan so perfectly understood and so entirely practical. All at once he drew me on one side, and whispered, "You know where the place underneath here leads to?" I confessed I did not. "To H. E. LL." He said this winking with good-natured cunning and sanity.

"Oh, that old fellow will talk for ever," said the doctor, whom the saviour of the nation eyed with good-natured approval. "Come here and I will show you a curious case of religious monomania."

We walked down the long room till we came to a gloomy, big, sturdy-looking man sitting in the second row.

"Philpot," said the doctor, "come here and tell this gentleman about that affair of yours in York cathedral the other day." It appeared that Philpot a week or two before, in a fit of religious enthusiasm, had stood up in York cathedral and denounced the preacher as "a whited sepulchre."

Philpot made his way to the front benches and stood up before us, evidently in rather a troublesome mood.

"Well, how are you this evening, Philpot?" inquired the doctor; "tell this gentleman how the whole thing happened."

"Oh, I'm all right," said the refractory patient, "but I don't want to speak of the affair, Doctor Horniblow. Look here, I'm quite well, and all I want is to get back home to my work and maintain my family. That's what I want, and so I tell you."

The doctor looked slightly surprised at Philpot's refractoriness, but otherwise as bland as ever. All he did was to give the sturdy fanatic a slight push on the chest, such as a schoolmaster gives to a stupid boy who does not know his lesson. "There, go back to your place," he said, "we shall see to that all in good time."

As if on purpose to give me a good specimen this time he passed a little lower down the long line of seats, and called out a man from the third row.

"This man," he said, "we have been treating with Calabar bean with great success. He will go out soon. Delusion that he is the Earl of Pomfret and King of Jerusalem."

The man, a tall, sturdy mechanic stood up and came nearer to us.

"Well, Jenkins," he said, "better to day?"

"Much better, doctor; feel nearly well now."

"You'll soon be all right. That man we are opposite to now," said the doctor, stopping, "is a case something like what we were speaking about. He will go on talking for hours without coherence or the slightest meaning."

The doctor spoke to the man, who at once stood up, and began an interminable harangue, the words of which were intelligible, but in which there was no other cohesion.

"There, that will do, my good man; go to your seat," said the doctor, and the patient quietly became silent, and retired to his seat.

"Johnson," said the doctor, beckoning to a young alert-looking man, near the end of the room, "how are you? A stud-groom of Count Lagrange," said the doctor to me in a low voice; "insanity produced by a kick of a horse; much better; will soon go out."

Johnson came out, answered a few questions from me about his health, and told me that he was very nearly well, he hoped, and retired to his seat in the most respectful way.

"Now here," said the doctor, looking at an anxious-looking artisan in the second row, "is a bad case of monomania. The man is an engine fitter, and thinks he has discovered perpetual motion, a not uncommon form of insanity among clever engineers. You shall hear him. Here, Wilson, come out here, and tell this gentleman about this discovery of yours. He feels a great interest in these things."

Wilson, a stunted-looking artisan, with an absorbed look, rose and stepped out at once.

He came up to me as the doctor walked on to say a kind word to other patients, and plunged at once into technical details, with one finger of the right hand placed on the top of a finger of the left, as when we argue difficult points.

"You see, sir," he said, "there is no reason in the world why this engine shouldn't go up mountains. From the fly-wheel we carry a band. The ratchet pinion is locked in. So the driving band runs round—" and so on for some five minutes, till I was rather glad when the doctor came back, and quickly reconsigned

Wilson to his seat, with "The gentleman understands all about it, Wilson, now; that will do."

"This young man," said the doctor, calling one from the ranks, a young mill hand of the ordinary type, and introducing him formally to me, "you will be interested to hear, is the son of the Emperor Nicholas of Russia. Tell him where you were born, my man."

With the utmost seriousness the man began to tell me how the empress his mother came to London in 1858, and lodged at No. 6, Greenarbour-lane, Hoxton, where he was born.

"The worst of it is," said the doctor, "that this young gentleman has such expensive ideas. It was all I could do yesterday to prevent him ordering two thousand rounds of beef."

"Three thousand, doctor, and why not?"

"And five thousand legs of mutton. He thinks nothing of money."

"Why should I? Ain't I able to pay for them?"

"Of course you are. There, I think you are getting on well. Go to your seat, my lad. You see that old man sitting down by the man who has the scheme for national defence?"

"Yes; he told me he was as comfortable as he could be, considering."

"Yes, he's very quick and rational, and works at his trade with us; still, he nearly killed a man a month or two ago. Lunatics are very deceptive."

Just then a little, smiling, elderly woman, with thin greasy black ringlets, who had been waltzing vigorously with a fat, imbecile-looking girl, halted near us, and began to simper and curtsy.

"This lady," said the doctor, introducing me, "you will be interested to hear, was cook to his Majesty George the Fourth."

The lady simpered assent.

"Tell this gentleman what was his majesty's favourite dish?"

"Roast mice and onion sauce," simpered the ex-official, and again capered off into a wild but not badly-executed waltz.

"I will now show you a case of hypochondria," said Doctor Horniblow, "or of some form of gastric disease conjoined to monomania."

We passed over to the women's side, and there, next to a fat and healthy but perfectly hopeless madwoman, sat a worn-looking, anxious mechanic's wife, with a depressed and disconsolate expression.

"Tell this gentleman about the snake

that you swallowed," said the doctor, in a kind and sympathising way.

The poor woman rose respectfully, and told me how, three months before, in eating a bit of raw turnip, she felt that she had swallowed the egg of some animal. Since then she had constant pains, and latterly she could feel a snake come up and eat whatever she swallowed.

"You must give me a lift here," whispered the doctor, as we turned away for a moment. "We are going to show her tomorrow a small blindworm, and pretend that she has vomited it. I really think it may answer."

I turned and asked her a few questions, and then told her that the doctor was very soon going to give her a very powerful medicine, which he believed would either certainly kill the snake, or in some way finally relieve her.

The poor woman gave rather a cold assent to the hope, and we passed on just as the terrible march round was recommencing for the last time before the strange party broke up.

"We have a great deal to learn about these mysterious diseases," were the doctor's last words to me as I got into my fly. "But we are going on, I really do think, in the right direction."

And I thought so too.

NO ALTERNATIVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DENIS DONNE," &c.

CHAPTER XI. "NOT YET."

"WELL met!" Jack Ferrier had cried out, in the jubilant agitation of this first moment with her, his queen, after their comparatively long separation; but they one and all felt that his words were a mockery, and that they were quite the reverse of "well met," that, in fact, they were very ill met indeed.

For the two men distrusted each other, and, through some extraordinary distortion of judgment, each one distrusted the girl. "Is she fooling me or him?" was the question asked of himself by both Claude Powers and Jack Ferrier. "Is she going to be a recreant to a freely-pledged faith? is she going to throw me over for the first fellow who holds his finger up?" Claude questioned savagely of himself. And simultaneously Jack Ferrier was saying to himself, "Is she playing for the higher stakes? is she using me as bait to bring

him on? It isn't in her to resist the temptation of being Mrs. Powers of the Court."

So even the men who loved her thoroughly misjudged her.

Meanwhile, demurely as she paced along between the two men, she was in a very tempest of agitation, of doubt, and bewilderment, and (it must be written) of flattered, fluttering vanity. She was no impossible monster of perfection, this poor little tossed-about heroine of mine. She was essentially human, therefore very faulty, and very lovable, and the conduct of her two companions taught her clearly that she was this latter thing, and well she liked the teaching.

She caught herself comparing them, contrasting them, defining delicate points of resemblance and difference between them, as they tried to talk lightly and easily about common-place things, leaving her the while in silence mercifully. And it never does answer to contrast or to compare two people together whom we have hitherto thought we liked equally well, and were equally well worthy of one liking. It never does answer. One must lose, and, as a rule, the one who loses is the one we have believed in the most blindly and fondly hitherto.

"Claude can talk, and Claude can be obstinate, and a trifle unjust," Harty thought; "he's rather masterful too, and, as he has no open claim upon me, he oughtn't to be that; but" (with a sigh) "he knows everything; perhaps Mr. Ferrier would alter if he knew everything too." "You got your locket safely?" she asked suddenly, speaking out of the fullness of her heart, which could only feed upon that one subject just now.

"Yes," he said, speaking so low that Claude, on the other side of her, could not distinguish the words that were spoken. "Yes, and the note too. What a freezing note it was; what chilling wind was sweeping over you when you wrote it?"

"Self-reproach for having used concealment towards you," she whispered promptly, turning her face to him, "and cold uncertainty as to whether I should be candid in the future with you or not."

"It won't be my fault if I fail to win your confidence," he muttered in reply; and by this time Claude was thoroughly vexed and aggrieved, as a man always is if he hears the "lowered-tone" system applied to another man by a woman in whom he is interested. He felt wronged and wrathful, only because he could not hear

distinctly what two of his fellow-creatures were saying to each other. And he felt annoyed with himself for entertaining such feelings, and altogether humiliated and put in the wrong place. It was almost a relief to him that they were just turning into the High-street, and that the moment for parting with Harty had come, for would not Jack Ferrier have to part with her too?

"Good-bye," he said, taking Harty's hand and holding it for a moment or two. "If my aunt tries to beguile you and your sister over to-morrow, will you come?" (He really could not constrain himself into abstaining from her society a day longer.) "You will come, won't you?" he added, amending the phrase.

Her heart did not bound responsively to his invitation. The truth came home to her heart, and pressed heavily upon it. She was not essentially delighted at the idea of seeing her lover the next day. The power of feeling ecstasy about him had passed away for ever.

"He has called me 'changeable,'" she thought, "and I am—of course I am—Claude is always right." And she felt a hot throb of anger against him, for that he had not combated her weakness. "A man oughtn't to let a girl change when once she loves him; Claude put the idea that I might do so into my head."

She was regarding him wistfully and uneasily as she thought over these things; and somehow she forgot to speak, and there was silence for a moment or two.

"You will come?" Claude asked, more earnestly.

"I suppose so," she said; and then she remembered that Jack Ferrier would be there; and at the remembrance, in spite of everything, her heart and her face lightened.

"Good-bye," Claude repeated, in flat, disappointed tones. A presentiment of what was coming was pressing upon him heavily. "Come on," he added, carelessly, to Jack Ferrier, as Harty mounted the door-steps.

"If Miss Carlisle will allow me, I will go in and see Mr. Devenish," Jack Ferrier said, hesitatingly; and Harty, with one passing look of apology at Claude, acquiesced in his request, while Claude, with a sickening, indignant feeling at his heart, went away.

She opened the door, and he followed her in, wondering within himself whether or not his time had really come, striving to

assure himself that he would be prudent, and not precipitate.

Harty walked along the passage towards the door of the drawing-room, where she anticipated finding the family assembled. Not that she desired to see one of their familiar faces. On the contrary, what she did desire, was a few minutes unrestricted intercourse with Jack Ferrier, in order that she might tell him everything she had to tell—everything that was clogging her spirit, and wearying her heart, before he had time to go any further.

"Before he had time to go any further." Jack Ferrier was not the type of man who suffers himself to be made the fool of time. His quick glance took in the fact as he followed her, that the dining-room door was open, and the dining-room itself empty. He had not come in for the purpose of talking polite conversation to the rest of the family! He had come in, he felt in a flush, for Harty, and Harty only.

"Come in here for a minute," he said, and with flattering readiness, she turned and followed him.

She did not think it needful to make any protest. She uttered no idle platitudes about "going to look for any one else." She knew that he wanted her, and so she only watched him closely as he shut the door, and (throwing prudence to the winds) came up impatiently close to her.

He looked so strong and generous in his grand, powerful, fair, manly beauty, as he stood over her, that she felt as a brown mouse, looking up at a magnificent tiger, might feel. There was about him such an atmosphere of manliness, and confidence, and courage. She longed to find out whether or not he would be pliant in her hands. She shuddered to feel herself swerving towards him and away from Claude every instant.

"Look here," he began, in wonderfully soft, subdued tones for Jack Ferrier, "the tone of your note seemed to me to imply that you wished me to keep away from you, and I have kept away all this time; but it's been the hardest work I have ever done in my life; tell me that it's the last task of the kind you'll ever set me. Harty! tell me in words what your eyes have told me already to-day, that I may come to you—"

He was going to take her hand, but she stepped back from him, clasping her hands together at the back of her neck, almost maddening him by the wild, childish grace of the gesture, perplexing him by the ap-

parent avoidance depicted in the act, for in spite of it all her soul was in her eyes, and all her soul seemed seeking him.

"Wait," she said, "I have something to tell you, something horrible to tell you, before you say another word to me."

"You can have nothing to tell me that will check the utterance of the words I want to say to you."

"Ah! but I have," she cried, impetuously; "that's what is so dreadful; I ought to have told you before—before we got to like each other as well as we do; I ought to have told you that day when you gave me your confidence about your brother—when you showed me the likeness, and told me how cruelly the original had been driven to death—"

"Wait till you have heard what I want to say first," he eagerly interrupted. "Nothing you can say can stop me; I love you so, Harty, that nothing short of your being another man's wife could stop me."

"I never could be that," she said, unclasping her hands, and holding them out to him as she sank down on a chair, and really believing that she loved this man so much for his bold fervour that the past romance of her life with Claude had been merely a delusion—"I never could be that; but I shall be Harty Carlisle to the end, because when I tell you, you'll leave me, and despise yourself for ever having thought of loving me."

He slipped a snake ring off his finger, and put it on hers before he answered. Then he stooped and kissed her. "The emblem of eternal devotion, my darling," he said; "our engagement ring."

And a ring that Claude had given her in ratification of a similar arrangement with himself was on the finger of her other hand the while. Another "emblem of eternal devotion," another twisted golden bauble writhed its fascinating folds, snake-like, around her. But she had no thought of either that gift or the giver of it; she was thinking solely that when she told the truth (as Harty always would tell it), she would lose this man whose love had become so precious to her.

"Our engagement ring," she repeated after him, mournfully; "the magic ring that forces me to tell you that Mr. Devenish is the man who maligned your brother into murdering himself."

"Now, you dear little melodramatist," he said, joyously taking her in his arms (and how ready Harty was to be so taken!), "what does this fact that you have mis-

takenly magnified into importance matter to us? Don't you think I can separate you from your step-father, Harty? Have you dreamt of me as a Corsican bent on bringing the vendetta system to bear upon our case? I've trespassed a good deal in the course of my life, Harty. I don't come to you a white-handed saint by any means, so I'll only pray humbly that poor Devenish may be forgiven his evil deeds by Heaven, as heartily as he is by me. Is your heart at rest, darling?"

"No," she said, with a qualm that was rendered agonising by recollection and self-reproach, as a vision of Claude Powers, and what he would be justified in thinking of her, rose up before her; "no, my heart isn't at rest; it's shaking with such a feeling of fear as makes me long to go away somewhere, and hide myself."

"Not from me, darling!"

"Yes, even from you."

She spoke with bitter, sad, truthful emphasis. All the excitement, all the glow of love for this man, and gratification at his expressed and honestly avowed love for her, had faded out of her face. A weary, harassed-looking girl, she stood before him, resembling far more a woman who had lost all she prized in life rather than one who had just won her lover.

"I'll soon cheer you out of these fitful fears, my darling," he said, heartily; "your spirit has been weighted by the atmosphere of your home far too long; but you'll rebound into your best self permanently when you come to me and a brighter life, poor little pet! And you have been bothering yourself this last week by thinking that I should cherish malevolent feelings towards Mr. Devenish? But the dead past shall bury its dead, dearest; and you shall be the one to let him know that I will be neither his accuser nor his judge."

"You're very generous and forgiving," she was beginning, when he stopped her by saying:

"No, I'm very fond of you; that's the secret of it; I'd forgive the deadliest wrong that could be done to me for the sake of getting you, Harty. You've become like my life to me."

She heaved a passionate sigh. "You would forgive anything—anything?" she asked, eagerly, winning him to her more and more each moment with all the force and power of her semi-unconscious subtlety. "Would you forgive me anything, and love me just the same?"

Her coaxing voice fell softly on his ear,

her nervous, light, thrilling touch was on his arm, her winsome mobile face was bending towards him in pretty ardent supplication. What wonder that he was ready to promise her anything—anything!

"Forgive you, and love you the same, I should rather think I could," he murmured. "Why, Harty, you couldn't do anything that would cost me an effort to forgive; you're too good, and pure, and true; what distrust of me made you say that, dear?"

"I have something else to tell you, something that I don't think you'll quite like," she said, tremblingly; "something that I ought to have told you before."

"Something that's about as important to us as your connexion with Mr. Devenish," he said, with a reassuring smile. "Well, tell it to me in your own good time, now or never." And then he drew her to him and kissed her, and Harty felt that she could not tell him about Claude Powers now.

"Not now; I will be quite happy to-night," she whispered, looking up at him; "it's nothing very bad," she went on extenuatingly, "nothing that many other girls don't do."

"It is that you have been in love before, I suppose," he said, quietly; "never mind; do you remember what one of the girls does in one of Charlotte Brontë's novels? 'buries her love-letters in a grave at the foot of a tree.' I prefer making the fire the last resting-place of such things; we'll each have a holocaust before we marry, for I have fancied myself in love before to-day, darling, and have written of my fancies; tell me, haven't I guessed the worst?"

"Very nearly," she said, beginning to look more leniently upon her own case and conduct to Claude, and still feeling strangely reluctant to tell out all that was to be told.

"Then now we'll say no more about it," he answered, lightly. "You're mine now, wholly and solely mine, aren't you, and I should like to tell your mother all about it to-night; may I go and speak to her?"

She shrank and shivered with a nameless, not to be defined terror. Her mother, in her amazement, would probably speak about Claude. Or even if maternal love and prudence made her mother reticent, malignant feeling would prompt Mr. Devenish to make some reference to the old bond. No, she dared not risk this being done to-night.

"No, no," she entreated, "come to-morrow in the daylight, when it will be

brighter, and I can bear it better; it will seem so sudden to them, that they may say something if they hear of it before they hear a word from me; I'd rather that no one heard of it to-night, because it is sudden, you know."

"Very well; no one shall hear of it to-night excepting Claude," he answered, cheerily.

"Excepting Claude!" she gasped out. "Oh, no, no, not Claude—yet."

"Why not?" he asked, with a little exhibition of surprise. "You hardly understand the sort of bond that exists between Claude and myself. He will be as glad for me almost as I am for myself."

"Glad!" she panted out.

"Yes, darling; glad. You women hardly understand this sort of thing. I know he was rather inclined to go down before you when he came home first, but he surrendered his chances to me."

"He did?" she questioned, in a fury.

"Well, that's a broad way of putting it, perhaps," Jack Ferrier said, easily. "We never talked about it, you see; but I could see that Claude understood what was going on well enough."

She was silent, tingling with mortification, raging against Claude in her soul. True that she was a recreant to the faith she had pledged to him. But then he was a man. It behoved him to be firmer and stronger than a weak "changeable" girl could be expected to prove herself. "Changeable!" Why on earth had he ever applied the epithet to her, and taught her to feel that she was so, without being utterly contemptible, utterly blamable? Changeable! He had known her to be so, had charged her with being so, and had gone on loving her just the same. It was her nature to be so. Was she criminal because she was natural? "If it's a demoniacal attribute he should have exorcised it," she thought, in a passion; "but he told me it was human, and Claude always taught me to respect humanity." Her being changeable, the fact of her having changed, was not one fraction so iniquitous as that he should have seemed ready to surrender her.

"And now, darling," Jack Ferrier whispered, caressing her as he spoke, "as you won't let me have it out with your people to-night, I'll go back, and leave you to have it out with your mother. Will you let me come to-morrow?"

Before she granted his request she professed one of her own.

"Don't say anything to Claude Powers to-night," she pleaded.

"Nonsense, nonsense; he's not one of the selfish bachelor friends you read of in unreal novel pictures of life, who hold that a man that's married is a man that is marred. He'll be heartily glad that I have won such a wife as you will be, Harty. Claude and I have promised each other that no woman shall ever come between us, and if I had fallen in love with a fool it might have gone hard with his fidelity to me. As it is, you'll cement the union, strengthen the bond between us."

How every word he spoke wrung her heart! How every mark of confidence he showed that he felt in her and her mere friendship with Claude, seared her soul! In her passionate, almost despairing, agony of self-humiliation and fear, she launched out the words:

"It will be a union in which there will be no strength; don't try to form it to-night."

"Perhaps his mood may not be auspicious, for I shall be late for dinner," Jack Ferrier laughed; "good-bye till to-morrow, darling, and in the mean time don't raise imaginary ghosts."

He went away then noisily, confidently, happily, stalking through the passage with a loud, self-asserting, determined tread, that seemed to be full of assurance of all manner of protection, and promise of refuge to her. And she stood in the doorway watching him, feeling fearfully proud of him, and of herself for belonging to him, and wondering tremblingly how it would all end.

She closed the door with a sigh and a shudder as he passed out of her sight. Not so ought she to have turned from the vanishing new love, but the fact was, that a vision of the old one had risen up before her. A vision of Claude as he would look when his eyes met hers for the first time after he had gained the knowledge of her perfidy.

She went into the drawing-room feeling like a criminal, laden with her books and newspapers, blessing these latter for that the sight of them took off Mr. Devenish's attention from her unconquerable agitation, and harassed-looking face. He was so eager for the latest intelligence, or at least for the sight of something sufficiently fresh to draw his thoughts away from the source of his eternal discontent, that he scarcely

glanced at Harty, who felt the abstinence from attention to be a sort of reprieve.

She was very quiet, very strangely subdued, very unlike herself for the remainder of that evening. The work which she held in her hand was an intricate design in point lace, which gave her a fair excuse for seeming deeply absorbed, and for bending her tell-tale face down very low indeed.

"How perseveringly you're keeping to that flounce, Harty," Mabel remarked. "I believe you have heard of some projected pleasant gaiety, and you want to deck yourself out for it; have you seen any one to-day?"

"Yes," Harty answered curtly, nodding her head.

"Have you seen any of the Court people?" Mabel went on, questioning with a slight increase of colour.

"Yes."

"Which of them?"

"Mr. Ferrier and Clau—Mr. Powers," Harty said, resolutely, throwing up her head, checking herself in the pronunciation of his christian name by the timely, bitter remembrance that she had forfeited all right to call him by it any more.

She faced Mabel's look of almost suspicious inquiry bravely enough, but her eyes fell by-and-bye when she found herself alone with her mother, and knew that the moment had come for her to tell her tale.

"Mamma, don't exclaim or show much surprise," she began, speaking very rapidly. "I have to tell you of a great change—I have promised to marry Mr. Ferrier."

Of course, in spite of the prohibition, Mrs. Devenish did exclaim, and did express a vast amount of surprise. But through it all there ran a vein of satisfaction at Harty having at last relinquished the man who had wounded Mr. Devenish; and Harty dwelt upon this satisfaction, and strove to take courage from it. She winced a little, however, when her mother said:

"It seems sudden to me, you know, dear, startlingly sudden, for I had no idea of it; but I suppose Claude Powers saw it going on, and was prepared to hear it?"

"He doesn't know it yet," Harty stammered.

"What! You engaged to the other man, and Claude not know it yet! Oh, Harty!"

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